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TRANSCRIPT

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

Marilyn Praisner, President

Michael Knapp, Vice President

Councilmember Phil Andrews

Councilmember Roger Berliner

Councilmember Marc Elrich

Councilmember Valerie Ervin

Councilmember Nancy Floreen

Councilmember George Leventhal

Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg



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Council President Praisner,

...silence and in the process of doing so will you join us all in remembering Police Officer Hoffman who passed away and for whom the funeral was this past Saturday and also our entire police force who is going through a very tragic incident for Police Officer Hoffman but for everyone on the police force. (Moment of Silence) Thank you. We have some wonderful presentations to make today, and we're going to flip them and start with the presentation of proclamation and recognition of the winners of the 2007 Montgomery County History Day Competition. Councilmember Andrews, and fortunately we've been joined by our County Executive who was available this morning -- welcome, Mr. Leggett -- who will join in this presentation and proclamation.

Councilmember Andrews,

Okay. Would all the winners of the competition who are here today please come forward. I know we have a good number. We had a chance to -- County Executive Leggett and I and Councilmember Elrich and a representative from Congressman Van Hollen's Office were at the awards ceremony a few weeks ago at Julius West Middle School. And the History Day Competition brings together middle and high school students from across the County. The theme this year was "Triumph and Tragedy." Come on around. There's lots of room up here. All right. Just keep going a little bit. There we go. There were fifty-five winners across the County in this year's competition, and I understand that ten went on to the state competition at College Park; and several are going on to the national competition. So we have a real strong tradition in Montgomery County of strength in history among our students; and really, there's no more important thing to know about than history in terms of making good decisions about the future. Emily Correll is with us today from the Montgomery County Historical Society, which is a sponsor of the event. And I'm going to present the proclamation -- be the proclamation presenter and then ask County Executive Leggett to say a few words. Councilmember Elrich was with us that day as well, and it was a great afternoon. So on behalf of the Montgomery County Council and the County: Whereas the Montgomery County History Day Competition challenges middle and high school students to broaden their interest in history, and Whereas the History Day Competition focuses on helping students develop a high quality of research and writing skills by emphasizing their importance, and Whereas the History Day Competition engages students to produce exhibits, documentaries, plays, or research papers using multiple resources, and Whereas the History Day Competition requires students to present their research findings and conclusions in a structured format, and Whereas Montgomery County History Day is presented by the Montgomery County Historical Society with support from the Maryland Humanities Council and Columbia Gas of Maryland, Now, therefore, be it resolved that the County Council of Montgomery County, Maryland, hereby proclaims congratulations to the winners of the 2007 Montgomery County History Day Competition and wishes them the best in their future endeavors, and commends your dedication and commitment as your love of history is an inspiration and a source of encouragement to all young people in the Montgomery County community. Congratulations to all of you, and thank you so much for sponsoring the event.

Emily Correll,



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(Applause) Thank you.

County Executive Leggett,
I want to join with Councilmember Andrews and others in recognizing these outstanding scholars, and also the parents and teachers of those who are here who helped them prepare their exhibits. It was a magnificent show of scholarly endeavors that we had an opportunity to participate in recently. So for the students, congratulations. I'm sure that you could go on and do much better things as you go on to college and to other academic endeavors. So congratulations.

Councilmember Andrews,
Good job. Emily?

Emily Correll,
One good thing is all the students here who've participated can participate again next year at a higher level.

Councilmember Andrews,
Great.

Emily Correll,
Thank you very much for recognizing these students. They have done some wonderful work. Their teachers have done some wonderful work because none of this is required. This is an extra activity that MCPS doesn't require. So these teachers have thought that this was a very worthwhile activity for their students to participate in, and they've done it well. And I have – the students had to earn these by being in the History Day Competition, but Councilmembers just get to have them. They're Montgomery County History Day Competition pencils.

Councilmember Andrews,
Well, thank you. Thank you very much. I'd like to go around quick and let's hear from each of the students -- tell us your name, school, and what your project was. Why don't we start with you.

Caitlin Perdue,
I'm Caitlin Purdue and my performance was Marie Curie and the Killing Cure – the discovery of radium.

Councilmember Andrews,
Come up and pass by the mike. Just keep walking. That's okay.

Caitlin Perdue,
Sorry, I can't go too quickly on crutches.

Councilmember Andrews,



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I understand. Okay. Come on up and tell us your name, school, and what your project was.

Philip Deke,

My name is Philip Deke, and I'm from Parkland Middle School; and we were working on A Supreme Court Decision for the Better – Black v. the Board of Education.

Councilmember Andrews,
Good job.

Philip Deke,
Thank you.

Biruk Bekele,

Biruk Bekele, Parkland, Brown v. Board of Education: A Supreme Court Decision for the Better.

Councilmember Andrews,
Good job.

Michael Valle,

Michael Valle, Parkland Middle School, Brown v. Board of Education.

Councilmember Andrews,
All right. Good team.

Anna Blue,

Hello. My name is Anna Blue. I'm from Ridgeview Middle School, and I did my project on The Overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy.

Councilmember Andrews,
Well done.

Nick Fowler,

Nick Fowler from North Bethesda, and we did ours on Fires in America.

Councilmember Andrews,
Very good.

Chris Perdue,

Chris Perdue. I'm home schooled, and I did my project on William Wilberforce and the Abolition of Slavery.

Councilmember Andrews,
Excellent.



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Bert Yaffe,

My name is Bert Yaffe, North Bethesda Middle School, and I did my project on Fires in America.

Councilmember Andrews,

Very good.

Kellie Chafin,

Kellie Chafin from A. Mario Loiederman Middle School, and I did my project on Maryland's Golden Leaf.

Councilmember Andrews,

Good job.

Brianna Sanders,

My name is Brianna Sanders. I'm from Eastern Middle School, and I did Support for the Japanese from the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

Councilmember Andrews,

Good job.

Sasha Gzirian,

My name is Sasha Gzirian, and I did a documentary on The Armenian Genocide.

Councilmember Andrews,

Good work.

Alekhya Reddy,

My name is Alekhya Reddy and I'm from Eastern Middle School and I did my documentary on The 1944 GI Bill of Rights.

Councilmember Andrews,

Good work.

Riva Fairhall,

I'm Riva Fairhall from Eastern Middle School, and I did my performance on The Voices Inside Franklin Roosevelt's Head and His Evian Conference Position.

Councilmember Andrews,

Good work.

Jessica Goldstone,

I'm Jessica Goldstone from North Bethesda Middle School, and my project was Valley Forge: Triumph of the American Spirit.

Councilmember Andrews,



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Congratulations.

Rebecca Spiro,
Hi. I'm Rebecca Spiro from North Bethesda Middle School, and our performance was called Spinoza Remembered.

Councilmember Andrews,
Good job.

Gina Lorenzetti,
Hi, I'm Gina Lorenzetti. I'm from North Bethesda Middle School, and I as well was in the Spinoza Remembered performance.

Councilmember Andrews,
Good work.

Christina Sanfuentes,
I'm Cristina Sanfuentes, and I did a research paper on Wilma Rudolph; and I'm from North Bethesda Middle School.

Councilmember Andrews,
Good work.

Beverly Uzoma,
I'm Beverly Uzoma, and I'm from Eastern Middle School. I did a performance on The Support from the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

Councilmember Andrews,
Good work.

Desiree Gingell,
My name is Desiree Gingell. I'm from Eastern Middle School, and I did a performance on Japanese Redress and Support from the CWRIC.

Councilmember Andrews,
Good work.

Catherine Liu,
Hi. My name is Catherine Liu, and I'm from Eastern Middle School. I did a documentary on The 1944 GI Bill.

Councilmember Andrews,
Excellent work. Congratulations everybody. Good work. (Applause) Now, this is going to be as big a challenge as winning the contest – that's getting everybody in the picture.



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So everybody needs to get – the people who are shorter than the others, move to the front; and – at least two rows. Okay.

Councilmember Floreen,
Height is very important.

Photographer,
Could you move closer in, as best you can, and make sure we can see you all? Okay. There's a lot of people taking pictures, so try and smile several times. (Laughter) A couple more – keep smiling. That should do it. Thank you everybody.

Council President Praisner,

(Applause) What an impressive group of young people. Thank you. And your projects sound extremely interesting. Now we're going to have a presentation of the Golden Shovel awards by Councilmember Floreen, and fortunately the County Executive can remain as well. These are our representatives from communities who have gone a little beyond the call of duty, so to speak, when it comes to helping their neighbors. Nancy?

Councilmember Floreen,
Come on down, winners. I'd like to invite Alex Cooke, Jimma Crockett, Colton Hayre, Evelyn Jemionek, Albert Lacey, Elizabeth Martin, Tom Melcher, Woody Mornini, Samuel Quiroz, and Ydiany Quiroz. That's you guys? Come on down, everybody.

Jimma Crockett,
Hi. I'm Jimma.

Councilmember Floreen,
Jimma? (Introductions and shaking of hands) This is now becoming our rite of spring event, I guess I have to say. Naturally as the azaleas start blooming, the dogwoods are out – we start thinking about snow and ice, don't we? Not really. But what we do is celebrate the beginning of spring and the end of winter. And what we've been doing over the past couple of years is celebrating the people who have made our community a little nicer for our neighbors by their volunteer acts. And we'd really like to celebrate today some folks and their community spirit and good neighborliness who've made it easier for their neighbors to get around in the snow and the ice of this past winter. We were a little worried. We were having a good weather stretch for a while, but luckily we got some snow and ice. And that brought out the goodness in Montgomery County residents. We began this Sidewalks Are For Everyone Golden Shovel Awards a couple of years ago to recognize individuals who come to the aid of their neighbors in just these terrible circumstances. And this year, we're honoring seventeen residents – though not everyone could be with us today – who all have been nominated by their neighbors, who put the Golden Rule to work in their shovels. I know that my colleagues and all of Montgomery County truly celebrate your kindness and your generosity and your spirit for your neighbors. And we would really also like to thank Bill Schlossenberg



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and the Gazette Newspaper who helped us with the publicity for this – put the ad in the Gazette – and a lot of your neighbors just clipped out the coupon and sent it in, in recognition of how kind and generous you are with your time. I really think this is important. We do a lot of talk here about making our community safe for pedestrians. We're working on some design issues right now. We're working on safety issues and enforcement issues. But you are the folks who make it possible for people to get around in their communities when the weather is tough, and we are so very grateful to you. So we have some nice little awards that Mr. Leggett will hand out with me, and some fine shovels that you'll be able to wear and show your – all your friends are going to be jealous of your shovels. So I'd like to thank you all for your great kindness. And I would like to thank your friends and neighbors who have recognized that because this is what makes a community – the people in it. And as everyone can see, we've got a lot of proud parents as well who are here to celebrate their children and their friends. So with that, we've got some awards. Alex Cooke, come on down; and Mr. Leggett has the certificate.

Alex Cooke,
Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Councilmember Floreen,
Thank you very much, Alex. Jimma Crockett. Thank you.

Jimma Crockett,
Thank you very much.

Councilmember Floreen,
Colton Hayre.

County Executive Leggett,
Congratulations.

Councilmember Floreen,
Thank you very much, Colton. Evelyn Jemionek.

County Executive Leggett,
Congratulations.

Evelyn Jemionek,
Thank you.

Councilmember Floreen,
Thank you very much, Evelyn. Albert Lacey. Oh, his neighbor! Well, come on down. Thank you. Are you the one who nominated him?

Unknown Speaker,
Yes, I am.



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Councilmember Floreen,
Oh, good. Well, we're going to want you to tell us about what he did; so don't go.
Elizabeth Martin.

County Executive Leggett,
Congratulations.

Elizabeth Martin,
Thank you.

Councilmember Floreen,
Thank you. Let's see here. Tom Melcher.

County Executive Leggett,
Congratulations.

Tom Melcher,
Thank you.

Councilmember Floreen,
Thank you. Woody Mornini.

County Executive Leggett,
Congratulations.

Councilmember Floreen,
Thank you. Samuel Quiroz. Ike, this way.

County Executive Leggett,
Congratulations.

Councilmember Floreen,
Hey, way to go kid. And I guess this Ydiany, yes? Okay.

County Executive Leggett,
Congratulations.

Councilmember Floreen,
Great. (Applause) Would anybody like to say anything? Mr. Leggett would.

County Executive Leggett,
Well, congratulations to all of the awardees. Councilmember Floreen said that we got lucky when it started to snow, and I'm looking at dollar signs. (Laughter) It is a troubling time for us whenever we have snow and ice, and it really places a lot of people in peril and jeopardy of injuries. And to the degree that people get out and assist neighbors in



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making the community safer, we're all better off for it. So congratulations to all the awardees for helping out. This is a good, strong, neighborly thing to do; and we encourage others to participate next year so that we will have even more awardees than we have this year.

Councilmember Floreen,
Absolutely. Thank you everybody. (Applause) And now we have to take a group picture, and you are going to be in front.

Council President Praisner,
Come around so some of you are on the other side. Yeah. Great. Don't lose Nancy.

County Executive Leggett,
We want to be able to see you all.

Councilmember Floreen,
Can we see everybody?

Photographer,
Can a couple of people in front just hold up your proclamations? That would be great. That looks good. We've got a bunch of people taking pictures, so please be patient. Keep smiling. A few more. One more. That should do it. Thank you.

Councilmember Floreen,
Okay!

Council President Praisner,
(Applause) Yes, a late arrival? Sure. Let's get the late arrival up here.

Councilmember Floreen,
Ann Martin? Thank you very much.

Ann Martin,
Thank you.

Councilmember Floreen,
Thank you and here's your certificate. We're very appreciative of your hard work for the community. Would you like to say something for the cameras? Go ahead.

Ann Martin,
Well, I live in Kensington, Maryland, and I shoveled out three of my elderly neighbors. And I even shoveled out my grandparents who live in Garrett Park too.

Council President Praisner,
Good for you.



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Councilmember Floreen,
Okay. Well, I know they appreciate it.

Ann Martin,
Yes.

Councilmember Floreen,
Keep it up. Thank you very much.

Council President Praisner,
(Applause) Okay. Well, unfortunately, we have to get back to some other business now. Thank you all very much for coming. Linda Lauer? Madam Clerk? Any announcements and calendar changes?

Linda Lauer,
Yes. We did add another MFP this morning at 10:30. So we are meeting at 10:30 immediately following this session, and that's before the afternoon MFP.

Council President Praisner,
Right.

Linda Lauer,
And we do have a number of petitions. We've received one – two actually from the Community Ministries of Rockville supporting funding for the Latino Outreach Program as well as the Rockville Emergency Assistant Program. A petition supporting funds for the Rebuilding Together; supporting funds for Potomac Community Resources; funds for Top Banana Home-Delivered Groceries. And then funding for Long Branch Athletic Associations; funding for the Library's budget; funding for Montgomery College; and full funding for the school's budget. Thank you.

Council President Praisner,
Thank you. I want to let my colleagues on the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee know that if we finish our work tomorrow in the PHED Committee, we can remove the meeting on Friday. So that should be additional incentive to get the work done in the PHED Committee. Thank you. Madam Clerk, do we have other minutes for today?

Crystal Brockington,
April 11th, April 16th, and April 17th.

Council President Praisner,
Okay. We have the minutes of April 11th, 16th, and 17th; is there a motion?

Councilmember Trachtenberg,
So moved.



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Councilmember Floreen,
Second.

Council President Praisner,
Councilmember Trachtenbeg; second by Councilmember Floreen. There was a question on one of the minutes, I think, and I wanted to make some clarification. The Council is legally required to take action on contracts for County Government employee union contracts by a certain date or to indicate that it will not approve the contracts. And that's why we had to formally vote on the two contracts when we discussed collective bargaining. The other recommendations for the committee on compensation are handled the same way as we'd handle any other committee recommendations. They're accepted and folded into the overall budget deliberations. So I wanted to make sure folks were understanding of that. All in favor of the motions to approve the minutes, please indicate by raising your right hand. (Show of hands) It is unanimous. Thank you. Now we'll move to a consent calendar. Is there a motion?

Vice President Knapp,
So moved.

Council President Praisner,
Council Vice President Knapp; second, Councilmember Elrich, I believe I heard. Any items that Councilmembers would like to discuss? Councilmember Vice President Knapp.

Vice President Knapp,
Thank you, Madam President. Thank you for your clarification. Just a general comment – If you look at today's consent calendar, we have actions – at least "C" through "O" who represent 60+ Montgomery County residents who are willing to serve in a variety of capacities for County government. And I just wanted to recognize all of their willingness to serve and willingness to make Montgomery County a great place. When we look at something like this and we say, "Why is this such a wonderful place to be," it's the fact that – and this is just one day – we have 60+ people who have recognized the importance of serving in a variety of commissions, advisory committees, different groups that we have to advise County government as to how we can do our jobs better. And I just wanted to thank all of them for the willingness to serve.

Council President Praisner,
Thank you. Well said. I see no other lights. All in favor of approval of the consent calendar, please indicate. (Show of hands) It is unanimous. Thank you very much. We will now move to the confirmation of the County Executive's appointees for three departments, and I will do them each individually. The first one is the County Attorney, Leon Rodriguez. Mr. Rodriguez is here; and Mr. Firestine, CAO, is here.
Councilmember Trachtenbeg.



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Councilmember Trachtenberg,

Thank you, Madam President. I want to make some brief remarks in support of the nomination for Leon Rodriguez as our County Attorney. I had heard a lot about Leon and had the opportunity to meet him a few weeks back before he met with the Council in full, and I knew certainly from his reputation that he would offer to this community both a wealth of knowledge but also of experience. And what I discovered in my conversation with Leon was that not only were those gifts that he brought to us, but that he would be fair and compassionate in any and everything that he's going to do as our attorney. And I know that he has a great love of our community, and I know that he understands the importance of having a good working relationship with all of us, including those on the Council. And it is with great pleasure that I support your nomination, Leon; and I look forward to many years of working with you.

Council President Praisner,

I will interpret that as a motion to approve the appointment; is there a second? Councilmember Floreen. Seeing no other comments, let me just add my personal support as well as my anticipation of very rigorous conversations with the County Attorney and of an opportunity to move this County forward in its approach. Let me also say that I personally – and I know on behalf of the full Council – appreciate very much each of the individuals who has served in an acting capacity in the interim while the County Executive has filled these positions. And I want to personally thank Marc Hansen for his efforts in this regard. (Applause) All in favor of the appointment of Leon Rodriguez as County Attorney? (Show of hands) It is unanimous. Leon, would you like to say something?

Leon Rodriguez,

I just want to thank the Council for giving me what I know will be a wonderful opportunity to serve, and to let you each individually know that I look forward to getting to know you and to working with you closely. Thank you.

Council President Praisner,

Congratulations. Thank you very much. Look forward to it. We have the next appointment, which is the Chief Information Officer for the Department of Technology Services, E. Steven Emanuel. Is there a motion?

Councilmember Floreen,

So moved.

Councilmember Trachtenberg,

Seconded.

Council President Praisner,

Councilmember Floreen has moved for appointment and second by Councilmember Trachtenberg. I want to make a couple of personal comments as well. I've spent a lot of time focusing on the Department of Technology Services -- including helping to craft its



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name if nothing else -- and the legislation that reconstituted the department. There are some folks sitting behind you who have served in that department in the kinds of conversations we've had over the years with this department in committee. You are getting a fantastic group of people to work with who have really moved this department into the 21st Century, let me say. And I want to thank Mike Knuppel for the work that he did doing two jobs at the same time -- and superbly, I would say. There's a lot that this Council is interested in focusing on when it comes to technology support and the fact that we have not necessarily put the resources into all of the department's needs in systems. So we have a lot of work to do together, and we look forward to working with you. Councilmember Floreen.

Councilmember Floreen,

I just want to welcome the new director and simply comment on behalf of Mr. Elrich and myself that we're looking forward to being able to sync our Palm Treo phones with system with this new direction.

Councilmember Elrich,

And Windows media -- and Windows phones also.

Councilmember Floreen,

So we thought we better get that right on the record. Thank you.

Council President Praisner,

I see no other comments. We all have our own technology wishes. I just want the computers to work faster. (Laughter) And also to make sure we can get the data that we need, and every department gets the kind of support that it needs from a data collection and analysis perspective. So with that effort in mind, all in favor of the appointment of Steven Emanuel as our Chief Information Officer, please indicate. (Show of hands) Mr. Elrich and Ms. Floreen, do you want to vote? (Laughter) Okay. It's unanimous. Mr. Emanuel, would you like to say anything? No, it was on; now you shut it off. We'll teach you the technology.

Steven Emanuel,

Madam Chairman, I just want to say thank you very much for your confidence in me. I'm looking forward to serving Montgomery County, the Council, the residents, and making technology a team process that we can all appreciate and enjoy. Thank you.

Council President Praisner,

Thank you. Congratulations. (Applause) The last appointment we have is Director of Office of Management and Budget, and they've brought some stranger in from outside the County who's going to have a learning curve that is just unbelievable. So we are all sympathetic with the challenges --

Tim Firestine,

He just asked me if it's too late. I said, "Yes." (Laughter)



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Council President Praisner,

Yes, it is too late. And that is the appointment of Joe Beach – Joseph Beach as Director of Office and Management and Budget. And in this case the County Executive has gone no further than the Acting Director and someone who has served in any number of roles in County government – learning its innards as well as its “outards”, so to speak, from the standpoint of the documents that we produce. He made a pledge to me at lunch yesterday that we’re going to improve program measures, budget documents, and accountability. So now I have it on the record. (Laughter) And we broke bread together – actually rice together – over that issue. So I would like to personally move the appointment of Joe Beach as Director of Office and Management and Budget. Is there a second? Second, Vice President Knapp. All in favor of the appointment? (Show of hands) It is unanimous. Joe, do you want to say something?

Joe Beach,

Just briefly, thank you very much for your support. I’ve always considered it an honor to work with the Council. It’s going to be a very difficult year coming up, and I know we’re going to have your support if not always your concurrence. And we are going to try to improve the budget documents and measurement and the other things we discussed yesterday. And, again, thank you very much. She couldn’t be here, but I want to thank my wife as well for letting me take this chance. Thank you.

Council President Praisner,

(Laughter) When I got elected to the Board of Education, we had this little joke that all the husbands had to learn how to use A Hundred and One Different Ways to Use Ground Beef. And by the time I left the Board of Education, Sharon Defonzo’s husband and mine were prepared to put out a cookbook. I think that when any of us serves in public office at the levels that any of the gentlemen in front of us today or any of the other people at this table or across the street, it is not just that individual who serves in that office; it’s the whole family, because there is significant sacrifice. And given the family that you have, Joe, and all of those responsibilities, I want to personally acknowledge that and thank your family for giving us you, so to speak, in the time ahead. All in favor and supportive? We did that already, I guess. (Laughter) We’ll do it twice -- we’ll do it twice for program measure perspective. Mr. CAO.

Tim Firestine,

I just wanted to note for the record – so we’ve filled all of the director positions now. There’s one left, that’s the Department of Environmental Protection. We’re continuing that recruitment. We put an ad in several publications and in the Post about two weeks ago. So we’re open – taking applications. If you know of anybody you’d like to suggest for that job, we’re certainly – just submit the application or submit their resume, and we’ll take a look at it.

Councilmember Elrich,

So this means that everything that goes wrong from now on is now officially your fault.



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Tim Firestine,
That's right.

Council President Praisner,
Councilmember Leventhal's light is on.

Councilmember Leventhal,
I just want to comment on that point, Mr. Firestine. I want to really congratulate the County Executive for the high quality of his appointments. And I think having had the chance to review all the resumes and vote for all the nominees, the County Executive I think has proven that it is possible to attract talent of the very highest quality and attract talent that represents a broad variety of backgrounds – certainly a broader variety of backgrounds than we've had in the County's history before. So I think that's very, very notable. We have excellent people who also come from a broad variety of backgrounds, and I appreciate that.

Council President Praisner,
Okay. The Council is in recess. The MFP Committee will begin at 10:30 in this room, and we'll be back this afternoon at 1:30 for some public hearings. Thank you all very much.

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Council President Praisner,

This is a public hearing on a Resolution to amend Transportation Fees, Charges and Fares, with various effective dates. A Transportation and Environment Committee Worksession is tentatively scheduled for May 3rd at 9:30 a.m. The record will close at the conclusion of the hearing. Before beginning your presentation, please state your name clearly for the record. We have three speakers: Patrick O'Neil from the Greater Bethesda Chevy Chase Chamber; Patricia Lesnick, Commission on Aging; and Ben Ross speaking on his own behalf. Would all three of you come forward, please? And, Mr. O'Neil, you're first.

Patrick O'Neil,

Thank you, Ms. Praisner. Good afternoon. My name is Patrick O'Neil, and I'm the Chairman of the Parking and Transportation Committee of the Greater Bethesda Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce. On behalf of this Chamber, I'm here to oppose the proposed changes in enforcement hours for the Bethesda Parking Lot District. If adopted, the changes would increase the enforcement hours of on-street meter parking by two hours every weekday morning. It would also introduce for the first time meter enforcement in parking lots on Saturdays. Our message is simple and direct: If it ain't broke, don't fix it or make it worse. There is absolutely no economic reason to institute the changes in the Bethesda Parking Lot District. And, in fact, we believe that extending the hours of parking not only on weekday mornings, but also for parking lots on Saturdays, will have a detrimental effect to our economy. Thanks to the unique and cooperative relationship between the Bethesda Urban Partnership and the County's Department of Public Works and Transportation, the District is in excellent fiscal condition. The revenue that would be generated from expanded parking hours and enforcement violations is not needed. On the other hand, Bethesda businesses are rightfully concerned that the proposed measure could have a negative impact upon would-be customers to Bethesda's businesses and restaurants. Bethesda already suffers from the misperception that it is an unfriendly place to park. The Chamber receives dozens of communications a month from frustrated Bethesda patrons regarding parking shortages and aggressive enforcement. The proposed expanded hours will only contribute to the negative perception. The primary reason for the proposed change in the parking enforcement hours is to establish enforcement uniformity throughout the County. However, the goal cannot be achieved as long as the Silver Spring Town Center operates under its current agreement with the developer. On a more practical note, uniformity for the sake of uniformity does not make sense because each parking area in the County has different uses and histories. One size does not fit all. North Bethesda, which has ample on-street parking in the evenings and on weekends, should not be treated like Bethesda. Similarly, Bethesda should not be treated like Silver Spring merely for the sake of uniformity. On behalf of the Greater Bethesda Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce, thank you for the opportunity to present these comments.

Council President Praisner,

Thank you. Ms. Lesnick.



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Patricia Lesnick,

Thank you. My name is Patricia Lesnick. I reside at 9900 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring, and I am speaking on behalf of –

Council President Praisner,

Excuse me. Is your microphone on? I want to make sure it is. Thank you.

Patricia Lesnick,

My name is Patricia Lesnick. I reside at 9900 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring, and I am speaking on behalf of the Montgomery County Commission on Aging. We appreciate the Council's support of the current Ride On and Metro bus service which allows seniors to ride free Monday through Friday from 9:30 to 3:00. The success of the current program has led to a fourfold increase in requests to WMATA for the senior transit fare identification card. The Commission supports Mr. Leggett's initiative to extend hours of free Ride On and Metro bus service to 24/7 in the amount of \$206,300.00 for seniors age 65 and older and people with disabilities. An extension of this important service is vital to our rapidly-growing senior population. Allowing the accessibility of 24/7 free ride on Metro bus service would not only encourage community participation by seniors in areas such as intergenerational activities, recreational opportunities, and community service, but also volunteer activities as well as paid work. Senior mobility not only counteracts social isolation but enhances self-sufficiency, strengthens coping skills, and builds independence which promotes the physical and mental health of seniors. Our CEO, Bill Novelli, has written a new book, Fifty Plus, igniting a revolution to reinvent America, a 21st Century agenda in the face of historic forces in the workplace, in the community, and at home. In it he emphasizes personal responsibility and chronicles stories of seniors who are making a difference in society and who are pursuing activities they are passionate about through exploring many avenues of social engagement. He stresses the importance of mobility in order to accomplish their goals; however, he notes that in our contemporary, heavily-populated areas, there are few places that older people can walk safely. When payment is required, for many the possibility of participating in weekend social and recreational activities as well as religious observances is, unfortunately, non-existent. Time delays in transferring at certain points often result in returning home later than three o'clock. Removing financial obstacles would give priority to senior programs that are responsive to the changing needs of seniors and would enhance their continuing contribution to the quality of life in Montgomery County. Accessibility to transportation would be a major step forward in fostering healthy and vital aging; providing this opportunity for seniors age sixty-five and older, as well as people with disabilities, will supply that forward step. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you.

Council President Praisner,

Thank you very much. Mr. Ross.

Ben Ross,



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1 Hi. I'm Ben Ross. I live at 4710 Bethesda Avenue in Bethesda. I'm speaking as an
2 individual today. I first of all want to thank all of you very much for your support when I
3 was recently trying to get a position with the state, and I really appreciate everyone's --
4 all the good things you folks have said about me. I'm here today as an individual to talk
5 about the parking fees and, specifically, in Bethesda which I'm very familiar with since I
6 live in downtown Bethesda. First of all, I'd like to ask you not to move up the morning
7 hours of parking from nine to seven. This is an important thing for the people who live in
8 downtown Bethesda because you need to be able to park a car overnight. And if all the
9 meters start at seven in the morning, and you don't have a car and you rent one or you
10 have a guest, you've got to go out and feed the meter before 7 a.m. And it's really
11 contrary to what we're trying to do in the County, and just not fair to people to make it so
12 inconvenient not to own a car and not to have your own parking space. As for the bigger
13 issues of parking in Bethesda, I agree very much with the Chamber of Commerce that
14 there is -- the perceived problem is much, much greater than the real shortage of
15 parking. And actually I think the first step will be the development on Lot 31 simply be --
16 not because -- I think there's too much parking actually planned there. But I think half
17 the problem of perceived shortage of parking in Bethesda is you can't find a space in
18 that lot, and you've got to go to a garage. But I think what we need countywide is to
19 subsidize parking less; but we have to get there in a way that doesn't put the central
20 business districts at a competitive disadvantage. And I think that there are several
21 problems in Bethesda. I think that the two-hour limit on the short-term parking really
22 drives people crazy, more than the cost of the parking. So the direct -- and I think also
23 just the fact that meters on the street are so cheap, which are actually the best space,
24 they're always in shortage. So, you know, there's an excellent book and some articles
25 that I'd recommend to anyone who has the time by Donald Shoop about parking and
26 what -- I think a package could be very well received that -- you can't do this this month,
27 but it's time to start studying it where the short-term meters in Bethesda, the hours are
28 extended to a four- or five-hour limit. You significantly -- very significantly -- raise the
29 price so that -- especially on the street meters -- so that if you're parking for five minutes
30 to run into a store, you don't care that it's \$4.00 an hour; you'll pay the quarter, and that
31 frees up the spaces for the really short-term people. And then for the people that are
32 willing to pay \$4.00 an hour let's say on Saturday night will pay it, and those that don't
33 want to pay can still go to the long-term spaces. And to do it you have -- there are new
34 electronic parking meters available that you can pay by credit card, which I think would
35 be another big enhancement for the convenience. And I'd recommend that you look at a
36 package that puts all of that together for the future.

37
38 Council President Praisner,

39 Thank you. This concludes the hearing -- or the speakers. Councilmember Berliner.

40
41 Councilmember Berliner,

42 Mr. O'Neil, I don't know the extent to which you have had opportunity to hear Mr. Ross'
43 recommendations previously, but could you speak to whether or not such a package
44 that Mr. Ross has put forward here would meet with your favor?

45
46 Patrick O'Neil,



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Certainly the increase of fees is not something that we would favor – simply because, as we stated before, that the parking shortage in Bethesda is a misperception. There are spaces in lots outside of the Bethesda rural area, for example, that are actually underutilized right now. So parking itself is a misperception that we're trying to address. In terms of fees, it's a delicate balance that business owners are trying to encourage people to come to their stores – to their restaurants – without it being so expensive that they don't venture down into downtown Bethesda. And that's the challenge that we're currently facing.

Councilmember Berliner,

So is it really your position that the modest increase in parking fees for on-street parking, for example, would serve as a disincentive – would actually discourage people who would otherwise use Bethesda from using Bethesda? I drive to Bethesda, and instead of paying what – what do I pay today, a quarter for an hour? Is that about right?

Patrick O'Neil,

No. You pay seventy-five cents for an hour if it's short-term and fifty cents if it's long-term.

Councilmember Berliner,

Okay. So if I had to pay a dollar instead of seventy-five cents, are you telling me I wouldn't drive to Bethesda to eat at Bethesda Row?

Patrick O'Neil,

I don't know about you –

Councilmember Berliner,

So you're concerned that other people would not.

Patrick O'Neil,

We're concerned that other people would not. And the proposal that was put forth was a package. And it's hard to take out pieces of that package and then have us comment on them without seeing the whole thing.

Councilmember Berliner,

That's a fair response.

Patrick O'Neil,

We would not necessarily be opposed to that; but presented as a singular item, yes, we would be opposed to that.

Councilmember Berliner,

Okay. I mean there are a number of us who are concerned about global warming and encouraging smart growth and encouraging less reliance on automobiles and wanting to have a vibrant, urban community. And we certainly want one that can compete with, if you will, sprawl and strip malls out. So I am -- obviously as someone who represents



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Bethesda, I am eager to see Bethesda be everything it can be. But I have to tell you, I struggle with this conversation with respect to how we currently price parking and whether or not we are doing it appropriately. So in North Bethesda -- which was the proposal, I believe -- to increase parking from staff and their fee -- tell me again. I unfortunately missed that part of your presentation. But tell us again why it is that the modest increase in North Bethesda, in your judgment, is inappropriate.

Patrick O'Neil,

We, frankly, are not opposed to the increase of fees in North Bethesda.

Councilmember Berliner,

You're not opposed to that. So only opposed to the increase in the hours? So that's seven to nine, and that would do what? Tell me again what would happen if you increased it from seven to nine. Why are you opposed to that?

Patrick O'Neil,

The seven to nine in the morning? Well, it's similar to what the gentleman to my right set forth -- that it's a problem for people who currently are residents in the area and maintain their cars. But from a business perspective, it is the perception -- not the perception, but it's -- the common usage of those spots over time that we're used to having early morning meetings, for example, that occur before nine o'clock so that meter parking is not an issue. It occurs all over Bethesda; and the real concern -- the major concern is Saturday's lot parking as well.

Councilmember Berliner,

So if one were to rank your concern -- the seven to nine, I need to -- and we can have a separate conversation because I get it from a resident's point of view more. I find that has more -- I find that more compelling, if you will, than I do understand from a business perspective, the seven to nine impact on the business community as to why people can't pay for parking during that time. So tell me again why, from your perspective, the business community shouldn't pay for parking from seven to nine in downtown Bethesda.

Patrick O'Neil,

There is no need for it that has been identified by anybody.

Councilmember Berliner,

Well, assume that there's some revenue that would be derived from that.

Patrick O'Neil,

In fact, we have talked to Rick Siebert at the DPWT; and any revenue increases are simply negligible for Bethesda because Bethesda's doing well. And there's no reason to increase the -- either fees at this point or hours when things are working just fine. I would pose it back to you, Why do it?



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Councilmember Berliner,

Well, I perceive it currently right now as a form of subsidy. I do perceive that – and it may be an appropriate subsidy. But I do perceive that it – I don't see why we wouldn't, quite frankly.

Patrick O'Neil,

From the budgetary standpoint, the Parking Lot District is self-sufficient on fees generated by parking meters and garages. Parking fines are shared with the County General Budget, and that may be where you perhaps see a revenue stream or revenue possibility. But that goes exactly back to our point of people wanting to come to Bethesda without having the feeling that they will receive a ticket from aggressive parking enforcement, which is what we hear all the time.

Council President Praisner,

Unless you have more questions, we'll move on to the next hearing. Are you done?

Councilmember Berliner,

No, I'm not done.

Council President Praisner,

Okay. All right.

Councilmember Berliner,

I guess I understand that there probably is a way in which this Council has used public hearings, Madam President. I perceive that it is important while we have witnesses before us in this format to –

Council President Praisner,

Well, it's a hearing to hear from the witnesses. The committees then have further deliberations on these issues where a more extensive discussion can be held. He's paid for his parking. I don't want to keep him over his time. (Laughter)

Patrick O'Neil,

Not yet.

Council President Praisner,

But he probably arrived on time for the hearing, which would have been – we're twenty minutes into the first hearing.

Councilmember Berliner,

Mr. Ross, if you would share with me again – your concern is that members of the community use on-street parking currently and that, from your perspective, it would be an imposition to have paid parking during that seven to nine period?



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Ben Ross,

Yeah. It's not a question of having to pay for it; it's the impossibility of paying. It's the fact that you've got to wake up at seven in the morning and get out of your house to put the money in the meter.

Councilmember Berliner,
I get that.

Patrick O'Neil,

Well, there is already an AM/PM Permit for \$20.00 a month which allows residents to park until, I believe, nine o'clock overnight. But the problem Mr. Ross was suggesting was visitors -- people who come --

Council President Praisner,
Who don't have the permit.

Glenn Orlin

There's no daily permit I don't believe. There's a monthly permit.

Councilmember Berliner,
Right. And non-car owners who rent sometimes.

Glenn Orlin
Right.

Councilmember Berliner,
Okay. Well, I thank you; and I look forward to having more conversations with respect to this.

Patrick O'Neil,
Thank you.

Council President Praisner,
Thank you all very much. This is a public hearing on a Resolution to Set the Rate or Amount of a Property Tax Credit for Income Tax Offset. A Management and Fiscal Policy Committee worksession is tentatively scheduled for today at 2 p.m. The record will close at the conclusion of the hearing. And there are no speakers for this hearing, so the record is closed. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is a public hearing on Supplemental appropriations to the Department of Public Works and Transportation's FY07 Operating Budget for Project Civic Access in the amount of \$150,000.00 and for the Division of Transit Services in the amount of \$973,440.00. Action is tentatively scheduled for May 17th. Additional material for the Council's consideration should be submitted by the close of business Friday, May 4th. Before beginning your presentation, please state your name clearly for the record. I believe



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there are no speakers for this hearing, and the hearing is closed. This is a public hearing on Special appropriation to the Montgomery County Public Schools' FY07 Capital Budget for Relocatable Classrooms in the amount of \$3,572,000.00. An Education Committee worksession is tentatively scheduled for May 2nd at 2 p.m. The record will close at the conclusion of the hearing. There are no speakers.

Councilmember Leventhal,
Madam President?

Council President Praisner,
Yes?

Councilmember Leventhal,
I just wanted to take this opportunity to restate a point I had made earlier if I could get Chairman Knapp's attention.

Council President Praisner,
Sure.

Councilmember Leventhal,
There was some consternation and misunderstanding, I think, about what I had said at a Council meeting; and if I could just restate my request to the Chairman. I would like to get MCPS' response to those witnesses who suggested that a substantial amount of the need for relocatables could be reduced through boundary changes. I'm only asking for a response from the school system to those observations. I never did suggest that the Education Committee or the County Council should draw boundaries. But I didn't know if that request had ever been transmitted to MCPS, and so I'm just restating that request. I would like to get MCPS' reaction to those comments which were made by several witnesses.

Council Vice President Knapp,
Sure. I will follow up. I did speak with the Director of Facilities for MCPS. I don't know that in the conversation we had they would have taken that as a direct request for a formal response in return, so I will follow up with them to see if we can get some feedback.

Councilmember Leventhal,
I appreciate that very much. Thank you.

Council President Praisner,
This is a public hearing on a Supplemental appropriation to Montgomery College's FY07 Operating Budget for the Art Gallery Renovation in the amount of \$700,000.00. Action is scheduled following the hearing. Before beginning your presentation, please state your name clearly for the record. There are no speakers for this item, and so the public hearing is closed. And I don't know whether the Education Committee, Mr. Knapp, has



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1 considered this; but if not, I would either entertain the Committee's recommendation or
2 a motion from an individual Councilmember. Council Vice President Knapp.

3
4 Council Vice President Knapp,
5 The committee did not consider, but I would move adoption of the Supplemental
6 Request of Contributions.

7
8 Council President Praisner,
9 It's been moved by Vice President Knapp and seconded by Councilmember Elrich. I
10 would note again for the public record that this appropriation is in the amount of
11 \$500,000.00 which was donated from an individual family and a \$200,000.00
12 contribution from the Montgomery College Foundation. No County funds are being used
13 in this project. With that in mind and with the motion in front of us, all in favor of approval
14 of the Supplemental? (Show of hands) It is unanimous among those present. And with
15 that, I believe the business of the County Council is concluded as a Council. I would
16 now note that all nine Councilmembers will be moving to committee meetings for budget
17 deliberations. The Management and Fiscal Policy Committee will be here on the
18 seventh floor at 2 p.m. The Public Safety Committee will be in the third floor Council
19 Conference Room at 2 p.m. And the Transportation and Environment Committee will be
20 in the third-floor Hearing Room at 2 p.m. And I remind my colleagues that at 7 p.m., we
21 will have a public hearing on the FY08 Capital Budget and Capital Improvements
22 Program Amendments for Montgomery County Public Schools. And we do have a
23 series of folks who have signed up for that hearing this evening. It will be held in the
24 third-floor Hearing Room at 7 p.m., and I believe the PTAs are also expecting
25 Councilmembers this evening before that hearing. So with that, the Council is in recess
26 until the hearing tonight. Thank you.